

Application Serial No. 10/031,850
Amdt. dated August 3, 2004
Reply to Office Action of February 19, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action dated February 19, 2004, the Examiner has rejected the subject matter of Claims 18, 21 and 25-28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,123,517 to Windau. The Examiner has also rejected the subject matter of Claims 19, 24 and 30-32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) and contends that they are unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,123,517 to Windau and U.S. Patent No. 3,622,905 to Mizuno et al. The references and the Examiner's rejection of the various claims are discussed below.

The Examiner has accepted proposed Figure 2 that was filed on January 8, 2004 and the objection to the Drawings has been withdrawn. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the acceptance of proposed Figure 2.

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 1-13, 15-17, 34 and 35 have been allowed. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his finding of allowable subject matter.

On July 27, 2004, Applicant's Attorney conducted a telephone interview with the Examiner regarding the Office Action and a proposed amendment to Claim 18 to more specifically define the present invention. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for extending the courtesy of the telephone interview.

The Examiner indicated during the telephone interview that Claim 18, as amended, patentably distinguish over the prior art previously cited, and is in condition for allowance and those claims depending therefrom are in condition for allowance. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his findings.

In response to the rejections, Applicant has undertaken to amend Claim 18 to more specifically define the present invention. Specifically, Applicant has amended Claim 18 to state that the adjacent longitudinal paths of the conveyor circuit slope in opposite longitudinal directions at fixed angles. Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references

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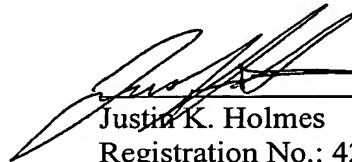
either alone or in combination with each other teach or suggest the present invention as defined in Claim 18, as amended.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 18, as amended, and those claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Applicant submits that Claims 1-13 and 15-35 are in condition for allowance.

In view of the amendment to the claims, as well as the remarks set forth above, Applicant firmly believes the present application is in all respects in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below if any further information is needed to expedite the allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,


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